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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Security Council
Sixty-third year

Identical letters dated 4 February 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I write in connection to the letter from the Permanent Representative of Cuba, in his capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, addressed to the President of the Security Council, dated 31 January 2008 (S/2008/62), and circulated thereafter to the United Nations membership.

As in previous letters to the Security Council, my delegation has repeatedly warned about the escalation of Palestinian terrorist activity from the Gaza Strip and frequency of attacks against Israel. The facts on the ground clearly show that Hamas bears sole responsibility for the deterioration of the situation in the Gaza Strip. It is Hamas' pursuit of terrorism and indiscriminate rocket fire that make security measures taken in self-defence to protect civilians, as is Israel's right under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, a necessity. Moreover, Hamas has chosen to divert fuel and resources in the Gaza Strip from civilians in order to manufacture more rockets. Similarly, Hamas fires on the crossing points into Gaza and abuses humanitarian convoys to smuggle weapons. In doing so, Hamas clearly — and cynically — has created a situation for the very people it purports to care for. Yet the statement circulated by the Non-Aligned Movement Chairman levelled all criticism against Israel and expressed no concern for Israel's civilians.

Excellency, I assure you that my delegation has no interest in ridiculing or distorting the positions of any Member State, either adopted independently or as a group, as the aforementioned letter alleges. Indeed, in our letter to you (A/62/667-S/2008/55) dated 28 January, we made clear that Israel believes that responsible members of the international community can play a constructive role by supporting the bilateral process between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. But that support means that Member States should take a balanced approach to the conflict. Embracing one-sided narratives as the statement circulated by the Non-Aligned

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Movement Chairman does, particularly when Israeli security concerns are wholly ignored and even trivialized, will not advance the prospects for peace.

Moreover, numerous members of the Council affiliated with the Non-Aligned Movement in their national statements, as well as other Non-Aligned Movement members in bilateral meetings with our Mission, have recognized the legitimacy of the Israeli position regarding terrorist attacks and condemned — in no uncertain terms — the indiscriminate rocket fire by Palestinian terrorists. These Non-Aligned Movement members have expressed their understanding that Hamas is liable for its actions and Israel has an inherent right to defend itself from these attacks. In the light of this, my delegation felt it necessary to point out the potentially deleterious effects of the statement circulated by the Non-Aligned Movement Chairman, and underscore how it failed to reflect the reality on the ground.

I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 17 and 18, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dan **Gillerman**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative